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142 Apparently a partial albino strain runs through the people of the southern islands, especially on Fulanga and Ongea. In some families the hair, and often also the skin and eyes of some individuals are honey colored.

The coarse, black hair of the Lauans ranges from the frizzly Negroid type to the wavy Polynesian type. Hair is considered important and is groomed 302 by both sexes. Many individuals, especially young people, dye their hair 386 with red bark to give it a coppery cast. The dye is prepared from the bark [824] of the *vetau* tree (*Ochrocarpus excelsus*) as follows:

> Strips of bark about 2 cm. thick are cut into pieces about 6 cm. square which are beaten with a stone hammer on a stone slab, and then soaked in water in a wooden bowl. Next they are rubbed over a grater (made of a piece of tin punctured with holes) into a wooden bowl. The red pulp is squeezed out by hand, leaving clear, brick-colored liquid dye, which is left on the hair for several hours. After the dye has been washed off, lime is applied.

Lime is prepared and used to cleanse the hair as follows:

> After women dive for coral on the reef, either men or women bake it in a wood fire for about a day. It is removed from the fire by means of prongs made of a coconut midrib; covered with *evuevu (Hernandia ovigera)*, banana, or breadfruit leaves, and placed in a coconut-leaf basket. The opening of the basket is lashed up and the basket buried in the ground for three or four nights. Then the lime is mixed with water, applied to the hair and left for a day, after which it is washed out in the lagoon. The treatment destroys lice, bleaches the hair slightly, and causes it to stand out from the head. Women who are careful about their appearance apply lime to the hair about every three weeks, men usually apply it less frequently.

In order to blacken the hair, according to informants, women cut the flower of the banana into slices about 3 cm. thick and rub it over hair which has been reddened by dye. *Wangiri* and *oki* are used for the same purpose.

[145] Gray hair is common among old people but few bald-headed (*ndriki*) persons are seen.

302 "Strong" hair that stands out from the scalp is admired, and to produce this effect a wooden comb (*seru*) is used. Informants say that this comb is modern and that they formerly used a comb (called *serusasa*) composed of the midribs of coconut leaflets (*sasa*) tied to a wooden handle with sennit. After the hair has been combed to stand out, it is shortened and shaped to the desired length by means of a burning brand, frequently of *thimbithimbi* (*Cynometra grandiflora*) bark. Most adults wear their hair from 6-10 cm. long. Formerly men wore their hair a few centimeters longer. Since the wearing of most head ornaments is a chiefly prerogative, hair ornaments are rare except in the dance or when sprigs of flowers are worn casually about the village.

● 515 The cleaning of one another's heads is a friendly pastime among the women. One woman sits in front of and facing another, who hunts through her lowered head, eating or killing the prey. Formerly a head scratcher (*i*

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milamila), consisting of a pointed stick about 35 cm. long made of *mbau* (*Pittosporum brackenridgei*), was used.

Some old men wear beards, but most men shave their faces at least once a week, usually with a piece of glass.

Nails are bitten off or cut with a knife.

Most Lauans bathe daily in the sea about sundown. There are no specific bathing places for men and women, but the sexes do not bathe together. Frequently perfumed coconut oil is rubbed on the legs, arms, and hair after the bath.

Men and boys over the age of six wear a kilt (*sulu*) wound round the waist and knotted. It extends to the knees and is made of a piece of trade cloth, gunny sack, tapa, or leaves. The upper part of the body is bare except on festive occasions, when an imported cotton undershirt or shirt is worn. The men wear ornaments only in the dance. Formerly they wore boars' tusks (*mbatchi ni puaka*), perforated at one end and hung on hibiscus bark, or an orange-colored bivalve (*sopui*) neck ornament. Aged informants say that the outer surface of the shell was polished with a stone and sand. The perforation appears to have been made with a sharp, pointed drill. Armbands (*nggato*), made of a shell called *leru*, were worn just below the elbow by both men and women.

Formerly the ears of men and women were pierced with a bamboo knife and were weighted until they hung to the shoulder.

Sandals (*i vava vulu*), made of coconut husk and bound to the feet by means of tapa, are worn to cover a foot wound. An eyeshade (*matai iri*) made of a plaited coconut leaf is worn occasionally as a protection against the sun.

Young girls and women wear skirts of trade cloth which reach from the waist to the ankles. The skirts of little girls from six to fourteen and of women working in the bush or on the beach hang just below the knee. The upper part of the body is either bare or covered with a sleeveless cloth blouse, which adds to the social prestige of the wearer. Young women formerly wore a short fringe (*liku*) made of hibiscus bark, or the leaves of ti, *nunu* (*Ficus*), *sitchi*, or *vono* (probably *Alyxia bracteolosa*). The women wear practically no ornaments except when dressed for the dance or for ceremonial occasions, when they hang a wreath (*salusalu*) of the dyed inner bark of the hibiscus, fragrant leaves, and flowers around the neck.

GEOGRAPHY

The Lau or Eastern Archipelago of the Fiji Islands is situated between 16° 43′ and 21° 2″ south latitude and between 178° 15′ and 180° 17′ west longitude (fig. 1). It is a chain of about 100 small islands and reefs extending

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given a steam bath in the house. In a special oblong wooden bathing bowl (*kumete ni silisili*) are placed cut *waro* leaves. A hot stone is put on the leaves and the infant is held over the steam by one of the *songone*. When the leaves cease to give forth steam, the child is washed in water. This bath is to clean and heal the navel. No men are allowed in the house during the process.

The most important birth feast is the *i mburua ni ngone*, which is usually held on the first or second day after the birth of any child. It may, however, be held on any day up to the tenth. This feast for a first-born, whether boy or girl, is larger and more elaborate than that for a subsequent child. The earth ovens of the father's and the mother's clans are used, but for subsequent children only the oven of the father's clan. If the family is prominent, the birth feast is large and attended by the whole village, if not the feast is attended by near relatives only. The birth feast of a child born out of wedlock is small. It is provided and attended by the mother's clan only.

Twins are desirable in Lau. Twin boys are called *ndrua tamata*; twin girls, *ndrua alewa*.

If a child is stillborn (*suthu mate*) the body is kept near the mother for three or four nights, for it would be harmful to the mother to take it away sooner. She would grieve and become ill with a sickness called *tandoka*, characterized by fainting, body pains, and sleeplessness. Stillbirths are buried in the cemetery above a previous burial from the same clan. The destiny of the souls of stillbirths is not clear to the natives. If both mother and child die they are wrapped in one funeral bundle and buried in the same grave. Their souls go to Nai Thimbathimba (p. 114). In miscarriage the foetus is kept two nights and then buried in the cemetery without ceremony.

When the child is born the father moves out of the house and sleeps in a men's house belonging to his clan until the child is weaned. Sexual intercourse with his wife is tabu during this period, but the father frequently has clandestine affairs with the women of the village who do not stand in the tabu relationship with him.

Feces of the infant are wrapped in tapa and kept in an excrement basket (*kato nda*) which hangs on the wall of the house where the child lives. This is done because they are a part of the child and removing them would cause the child to have diarrhea. For the first child the basket must be kept 100 days, after which the father throws it over the reef into the sea. The spot where it sinks is marked with a tabu stick. Nobody may fish there until the ceremony, called *mangitchi ni ona singa*, is held when the child is one year old. If the father erects a tabu stick he is obliged to give a big feast when the tabu is lifted. The feast adds to his prestige and to that of the child. If the parents cannot provide food for a big feast, they simply throw the basket into the sea without declaring a tabu. The excrement basket for a subsequent offspring need be kept only until the child shows he is gaining strength, usually two

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585 wedding guests leave the house except the young couple and three or four old female relatives of the bridegroom, including his mother, grandmother, and paternal aunt, who remain for the "virginity test" (*rarawa*). The women sleep in the lower part of the house and the bride and groom retire to the upper part which is frequently screened off by a curtain of Fijian barkcloth. Here a nuptial bed of mats and barkcloth has been laid by the groom's relatives. On it the bride's relatives have spread a piece of white barkcloth for the virginity test.

In the morning when the young couple leave the house the old women examine the barkcloth covering the bed. If stains are found they consider the bride to have been a virgin. Often, if the bride is not a virgin, the groom helps her secretly to secure the blood of a chicken or a pig or some red dye to produce the desired effect.

The old women announce the news to the village. They shout and dance and display the signs of virginity to the bride's relatives who are very proud. The village gongs are beaten and frequently the barkcloth is hung outside the house as a proof to all the villagers. The groom's relatives prepare a large feast for the bride, now called "new woman" (*alewa vou*), and her relatives. They kill a pig if possible, and the apertures of its body—the snout, eyes, ears and anus—are covered with banana leaves as a symbol of the bride's virginity. If the signs of virginity are not produced, the girl's relatives are ashamed. The groom's relatives are angry, and they prepare only a very small feast for the young couple.

If the bride is wearing "virgin locks" the ceremony called cutting the locks (*kotchi ni tombe*) is held on the day after the wedding. Both sides assemble [431] in the groom's house and the groom's clan presents mats and tapa to the clan of the bride. The gifts are piled up, the tapa on top. The bride sits on the pile and her mother-in-law singes the locks, or, if a pair of scissors is available, cuts them. They are usually discarded but occasionally the girl makes them into a necklace.

Another ceremony, called "the drying" (*i vaka mamatha*), takes place in the groom's house on the same day. The groom's relatives present property to the bride's relatives according to the ceremonial presentation pattern. Williams (27, vol. 1, p. 169) calls this ceremony "drying-of-the-tears" which the bride shed on leaving her home. Occasionally it is held on the evening of the wedding day after the *mangitchi ni kana vata*, the "eating together" feast.

● [515] A ceremony called bath in the sea (*i silisili ki wai levu*) is held on the fourth day after the wedding. The bride takes a bath in the sea for the first time after her marriage. The natives say that if she bathes in the sea before the fourth day, water will get into her stomach and make her sick. The bride goes fishing with her relatives to procure sea food for the large feast which

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252 not allowed to participate in the preparation of food for the earth oven. However, in households today, where there is a shortage of adult males, uncircumcized boys and occasionally even women help.

Usually the oldest active woman in each kitchen group directs the procuring and preparation of food to be boiled. When the group includes the mothers of both husband and wife, the husband's mother takes precedence. (As shown in table 1 and figure 3, K22, 23, 24 is supervised by 118.) When the group includes the wife and the husband's sister, the wife takes precedence if she is about the same age as the husband's sister, whereas the husband's sister takes precedence if she is older than the wife. (As shown in figure 3 and table 1, K19, 20 is supervised by 91, whereas K8, 9, 11 is supervised by 35.) The activities centering around the earth oven are directed by the oldest active man in each earth-oven group. I found no native term for the supervisor of the kitchen or of the earth oven.

264 The evening meal is usually eaten in the kitchen hut. An eating mat is laid on the ground, food placed on it, and the group sits around it. The highest ranking man sits at the head, the men and boys seated according to rank on his right side. The women sit on his left side, and the young girls serve.

[415] Food from the earth oven is served on breadfruit or banana leaves or on plates of plaited coconut leaf. Large fish are placed on a wooden fish platter (*i sovasova ni ika*) and divided into portions according to rank. The head of the fish, the center of mana, goes to the highest ranking man. Soup is served in cups (*mbilo*) of half coconut shells. Eating is done with the fingers.

● [515] After the meal a finger bowl of fresh water is passed first to the head of the group, then to the other members.

Fire Making

372 A native from the island of Kambara made fire in three minutes by the following method:

> He took a dry log of *yasiyasi*, one section (about 5 by 30 cm.) of which had been stripped of bark. He sat down and placed the log in front of him with the exposed surface on the upper side nearest him. He held a small, dry, pointed stick, 3.5 cm. in diameter and 35 cm. long, in his left hand as one holds a pencil, the right hand partly covering the left. He rubbed the pointed end along the exposed surface of the log until a groove formed in the log and wood dust collected at the end of the groove. When the wood dust began to smoke, he wound a piece of coconut reticulum into a coil and shook the smoking wood dust into the coil. He then took the coil in both hands and waved it to-and-fro until it caught fire.

For fire making *(nita)*, *waro* and *nawanawa (Cordia subcordata)* woods are preferred. Sticks are dried and stored on the beams in the lower end of the house. Fire is transported by lighting the split end of a coconut spathe and wrapping it in pandanus.

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is the ideal, and to avoid disarranging their hair many Fijians sleep with a wooden headrest or other support under their necks like the Japanese.

These "big heads" are difficult to keep clean. While the Lauan women gossip in the kitchen huts there is always at least one engaged in casually hunting down and consuming the prey from the woolly hair of a relative. For a thorough cleansing, lime prepared by baking reef coral in an earth oven is rubbed into the hair while it is wet. This is left on for a day and then rinsed out in the lagoon. One frequently sees men, women, and children, their heads caked with white lime, going about their work or play in the village. Lime stiffens and slightly bleaches the hair. Moreover the hair of many individuals is bleached by the sun. A few pure blooded Lauans have naturally blond hair which is easily mistaken for hair bleached by lime or sunshine. In certain families, especially on Fulanga, the hair and frequently also the skin and eyes of some individuals are honey colored. One can prove that this coloring is natural by the blond haired babies which are common in these families. Blondness among the Lauans is probably due to a hereditary strain of partial albinism.

Many individuals of both sexes, especially young people, dye their hair, after liming it, with the red bark of a tree (*Oehrocarpus excelsus*). This gives it a becoming coppery cast which is much admired. The red barked tree grows only in a few spots on Kambara. Once when we had chased a turtle the length of the island the girls pointed to a coconut grove ashore and asked the men to get them some drinking nuts. As soon as the canoes were beached the girls disappeared and after some time they returned, laden with strips of bark. The next day all the girls in the village had red hair.

A strong wooden comb with several well-spaced teeth is used for the painful process of combing the thick, frizzly hair away from the scalp. Kambarans go through this ordeal

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291 rank. Outside a village the natives often wind a piece of cloth about their heads as a protection against the sun. Hats are not worn.

292 For Sunday services in the mission church, and ceremonies in honor of visiting British officials on Kambara, the men tuck a clean white shirt into the *lavalava* and the women don [294] a simple sleeveless blouse. Clothes are sewn on a few sewing machines which found their way to the islands during the prosperous days of the copra trade. Lately the natives have [435] had some difficulty in keeping themselves clothed on account of the low price of copra which they exchange for cloth at the local store in Tokalau. Clothes are usually very ragged, especially those of the old people, and occasionally instead of trade cloth a gunny sack or a fringe of banana leaves is worn while working in the gardens.

296 312 The introduction of cloth brought a laundry problem to Kambara, an island where fresh water has always been scarce. At the present time most of the fresh water collected on Kambara and also the brackish water from the springs is used for washing clothes. Soap, bluing and heavy charcoal irons for pressing must be bought at the store. On Saturday mornings the young girls wash near the water barrels under the eaves. Beating the clothes with a stick against a board, they raise a billowing froth of rainbow-hued suds to make up for lack of water.

● 515 136 Considering the rough close-to-nature existence, and the lack of fresh water on these islands, I was impressed with the personal cleanliness of the Lauans. Men, women and children bathe daily in the lagoon, usually at sundown before the evening meal. This is done in spite of the danger of sharks which are common in these waters. Children are [868] taught from babyhood to keep a keen lookout for their dark menacing forms, which are occasionally seen darting about in the lagoon right up to the shore line.

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585 exchange native dances and the old people drink kava. Late in the evening all the guests leave the house except the young couple and frequently three or four old female relatives of the bridegroom, including his mother, grandmother, and paternal aunt who remain for the "virginity test". They sleep in the house with the young couple to find out whether or not the bride is a virgin.

If the results of the test are satisfactory the old women announce the glad news to the village by shouting and dancing, and the village drums are beaten. To celebrate the occasion a large feast is prepared by the young man's relatives. A pig is killed and the body openings such as the snout, eyes, ears, and anus are frequently covered with banana leaves as a symbol of virginity. If the signs of virginity are not produced the groom's relatives are angry and the girl's relatives are very much ashamed. In this case only a very small feast is prepared by the man's side.

585 302 [614] [606] If the girl is wearing "virgin locks" they are cut on the day after the wedding. Both clans assemble in the young man's house where his clan presents mats and barkcloth to the girl's clan. The mats are piled and the barkcloth is placed on top. The bride sits on the pile and her mother-in-law singes the locks, or cuts them if a pair of scissors is available. The hair is usually thrown away, but occasionally the girl makes it into a necklace.

585 Another ceremony takes place in the man's house on the day after the wedding. The man's relatives present property to the girl's relatives. Every morning for four days the relatives of the groom prepare a small breakfast feast for the [515] young couple. The ritual washing is held for the bride on the fourth day after the wedding. The bride takes a bath in the sea for the first time since her wedding. The natives say that if she bathes in the sea before the fourth day, water will get into her stomach and make her sick. The bride goes fishing with her relatives to secure sea-food for the large